








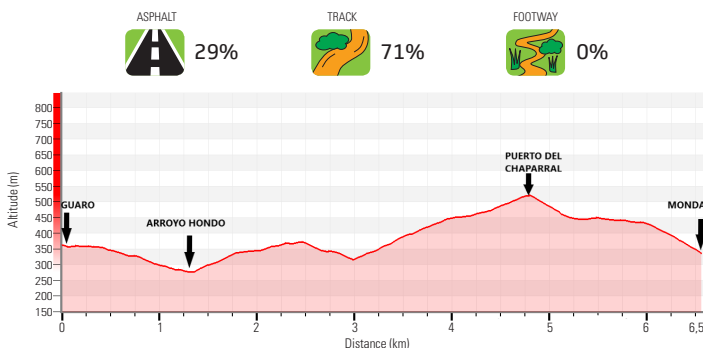




Stage 5

Guaro - Monda

Estimated duration	3 h		 1	Environment Hazards
Cumulative elevation gain	625 m		 1	Navigation
Cumulative elevation loss	324 m		 1	Underfoot conditions
Aprox. distance	6,5 km		 2	Physical Effort
Trail type	linear		Difficulty (MIDE scale): 1 to 5	
Year-round conditions, estimated time according to MIDE criteria, without stops, 2018. Mode: On foot				



P	O	I	N	T	X	Y	ALTITUDE	DISTANCE
1	Guaro				335690	4058444	362	Km 0
2	Arroyo Hondo				334618	4057851	268	Km 1,3
3	Puerto del Chaparral				334447	4056318	513	Km 4,8
4	Monda				335916	4055754	337	Km 6,5

Maps E/1:25.000 • 1065-II. 1066-I.

Access to the starting point. Calle Camino de Sotornil, which leaves the crossroads in Guaro, on the A-7100.

Access to the finishing point. Guaro Avenue. Entrance to Monda from Guaro on the A-7100.



THE STAGE IN SUMMARY

The shortest stage of the GR-243 Sierra de las Nieves takes us through a hilly area and smaller watercourses, which drain into the Grande River down the Seco stream. As an overview, the landscape is a combination of copse-covered hills, emerging tropical plantations on the floodplains and patches of Mediterranean vegetation in the most inhospitable areas, with scattered Cork oaks, Holm oaks and Aleppo pines. From the route's highest points, there are stunning panoramic views of the different mountain ranges that surround us: the Sierras Blanca and Canucha to the southwest. In the same direction, are the easternmost hills of Monte Albornoque and the Dehesa traditional pastures of Moratán and Gaimón covered with woodland of Pine and Oak. La Parda de Tolox, to the northwest, stands out for not only its distinctive reddish colouring, but also for the raised plateaux of the Tolox mountain range towards its rear. From the Chaparral pass, looking towards Monda, the fertile Guadalhorce Valley and the coast, where the Pine-covered slopes of Alpujata and Mijas mountain ranges, bring a change of scenery.

▲ Campos de labor y forestal

▼ Access the stage's GPS data here



CONNECTIONS WITH OTHER ROUTES

- **PR-A 279:** Up to the stage's mid-point.

A NOTE OF CAUTION

The route runs along farm tracks often used by vehicles, so it is necessary to pay attention. We must respect the farmland and refrain from picking fruit from the groves. Due to limited water sources, carrying a supply of water is strongly advised. As the stage has a leg-breaking profile, with constant ups and downs and few flat stretches, telescopic poles are recommended. Take a pair of binoculars with you to be able to see the birds in their different natural environments along the way.

ROUTE DESCRIPTION

We leave Guaro along the Sotornil or Hondo stream path, coinciding with the route of the PR-A 249 (Guaro-Chiribénitez), passing farmhouses, second homes and a mosaic of groves among which Olive trees, Almond trees and the recently added Avocado trees stand out.

▼ A mixture of woody crops



“ The productive system of polyculture, is an important resource in a region affected by the Mediterranean climate's fluctuations, with cyclical droughts and infestations of pests that have come to diminish harvests. Until recently, polyculture allowed a subsistence economy based on self-consumption and the sale or exchange of surpluses. The terraced and uncultivated areas that can be seen along different stretches and the ruins of a good number of rural properties are the remains of a way of life that will cease to exist and to which we are mere witnesses. The lack of mechanisation, partly due to the difficult terrain, and the costs make the development of competitive agriculture unfeasible. Some farms have opted for quality and artisanal production methods. ”

Looking over to the west from here is a striking contrast between the hilly farmland, with dark green patches of scrubland, against the arid and lighter Tolox mountain range. Once we have forded one of Arroyo Seco's tributaries, we gain enough height to see out over a wide area that includes the Tolox mountain range, where the highest peaks of the National Park are located, as well as the Canucha mountain range, also of sedimentary origin. The Parda de Tolox mountain range stands out for its ruggedness, with its reddish colouring and ample cover by forest of Maritime pine trees. Without a doubt, this stretch provides a marvellous synopsis of the geological richness of the Sierra de las Nieves Biosphere Reserve and the associated rock types and vegetation.

At the bottom of the valleys, some travertine platforms can be seen, created by water flowing over carbonate materials, forming small detritic platforms in the form of natural terraces. Farmers have used these to create irrigated vegetable plots. Halfway along the route, at the hamlet of La Erriza del Manchego, (**km 3.2**), the GR-243 route makes a sharp turn to the south and begins a long climb up El Retamal. This provides views to the west of the deep valley shaped by the Seco stream. We eventually reach the Chaparral pass, the

▼ Some Cork oak trees are still found alongside the pathway





▲ Monda

highest point on the route, at 522m above sea level. This is an ideal natural viewpoint to appreciate one of the most significant mountains in the Sierra de las Nieves National Park: Sierra Real. Indeed, this large peak formed of peridotites is now part of the new protected area thanks to the great environmental treasures it holds. Among these are a good number of endemic serpentine botanical species, including the Pinsapo Spanish fir.

“ Sierra Real was the focal point of an important Moorish revolt that took place between 1569-1570 and was led by El Meliche a native of Istán. The Moors established a stronghold on the Plaza de Armas peak, also known as Arboto. Philip II sent the Duke of Arcos, in command of 4,000 foot soldiers and 100 cavalry to put down the insurrection, with the captured Moors being deported to North Africa. These events have had a great influence in the names of locations in Sierra Real: Plaza de Armas (literally: Weapons Square), Puerto de la Refriega (literally: Skirmish Pass), etc. ”

We now enter the river basin of the River Seco, not to be confused with the Seco stream, and come across the wide open Guadalhorce Valley and the mountain ranges of Alpujata and Mijas. In the centre of the patchwork of hills, mountains and fruit orchards lies Monda on a plain, at the foot of the ancient castle of La Villeta, converted into a country hotel. We descend steadily until we reach the road to Guaro, next to the sports facilities and municipal swimming pool. Continue walking on the right-hand side along the pavement and soon arrive at the centre of this pretty white village.